

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 037331

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY SAIGON

INFO ALL EAST ASIAN AND PACIFIC DIPLOMATIC POSTS

USAAAGE NAKHON PHANOM

CINCPAC

AMCONSUL BIEN HOA

AMCONSUL CAN THO

AMCONSUL DANANG

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMCONSUL NHA TRANG

USDEL JEC PARIS

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COGARD FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, DC, US

SUBJECT: FEBRUARY 25 EA PRESS SUMMARY

INDOCHINA

1. SHIPLER (NYT) FROM SAIGON SEES US BREAKING SPIRIT, IF NOT LETTER, OF C-F AGREEMENT SINCE DIRECT SUPPORT AIDS SVN VIOLATIONS. "HIGH PLATEAU" OF SUPPORT INCLUDES "HUGE" QUANTITIES OF WEAPONS AND AMMO, AND SERVICES OF AMERICANS WHO HAVE BECOME "INTEGRAL PARTS" OF SVN SUPPLY, TRANSPORT AND INTELLIGENCE. AMONG US CITIZENS IN SUPPORTING ROLES ARE MECHANICS AND TECHNICIANS, UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 STATE 037331

PENTAGON-BASED GENERALS WHO TOUR VNAF FIELDS TO ASCERTAIN

NEEDS, "LIAISON MEN" WITH "UNCLEAR ROLES" WHO REPORTEDLY GIVE MILITARY ADVICE "FROM TIME-TO-TIME," DOD CIVILIANS WHO MAKE SHORT VISITS TO PROVIDE SPECIALIZED TECHNICAL HELP, AND CIA OFFICIALS WHO ADVISE SVN POLICE ON INTELLIGENCE. MIL AID SET AT 813 MILLION DOLS THIS YEAR, BUT 1.45 BILLION REQUESTED FOR NEXT YEAR, WITH MOST OF INCREASE PROBABLY FOR AMMO. SHIPLER OPINES THAT TRUE MIL SUPPORT COSTS CONSIDERABLY HIGHER SINCE ECON AID PROGRAMS "DUMP" MILLIONS INTO GVN DEFENSE BUDGET, AND OTHER COSTS ARE HIDDEN IN DOD BUDGETS AND "NOT LABELED 'VIETNAM.'" MIL AID HAS SHARP POLITICAL IMPACT SINCE ENABLES GVN TAKE OFFENSIVE AGAINST VC AND GIVES THIEU "MUSCLE" TO FORESTALL POLITICAL SETTLEMENT.

VC MAINTAIN MILITARY PRESENCE AND REFUSE PARTICIPATE IN ELECTIONS UNLESS FREEDOMS OF ACCESS TO PRESS AND OPEN CAMPAIGNING MENTIONED IN C-F ACCORDS ARE GUARANTEED. US INTELLIGENCE OFFICIALS CONTEND NVA BUILDUP IN SVN GOES ON. SOME DIPLOMATS SEE COMMUNIST FRUGALITY WITH AMMO AS INDICATION USSR AND PRC PLACE LIMITS ON RESUPPLY. AMID POLITICAL STALEMATE, INCONCLUSIVE WAR CONTINUES. SHIPLER DESCRIBES US DOD CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES "EVERYWHERE" IN VNAF REPAIR SHOPS AT BIEN HOA, QUOTES THEM THAT MOST WORK WOULD NOT BE DONE WITHOUT THEM AND THAT VIET TRAINEES LACK DESIRE TO LEARN DUE TO LOW PAY AND WAR-WEARINESS. SHIPLER BELIEVES EVIDENCE EXISTS THAT AMERICANS IN LOGISTICS "OCCASIONALLY CROSS OVER" INTO ADVISORY AREAS PROHIBITED BY C-F; RETELLS STORY OF KOSH CAPTURE IN PARACELS AND UNCLEAR ROLE OF "LIAISON MEN," SAYS "ZEALOUS" AMERICANS STATIONED IN PROVINCES MAY GIVE MILIARY ADVICE. QUOTES SVN POLICE OFFICERS THAT CIA MEETS WITH STAFFS TO ANALYZE INTELLIGENCE DATA, AND POLICEMEN SPOKE TO RECENTLY-ARRESTED MARKHAM ABOUT "POLICE ADVISERS." AID TO POLICE APPEARS HUSH-HUSH SUBJECT, AND AMB. MARTIN AND DEFATT REFUSE REQUESTS FOR INTERVIEWS. ICCS OFFICERS PRIVATELY SCOFF AT US CONTENTION THAT F-5E IS SIMILAR TO F-5 BEING REPLACED, BUT GVN "UNLIKELY" TO GIVE PERMISSION FOR CHECK; ICCS IS IN EFFECT TO AUDIT WEAPONS, AMMO SHIPMENTS FOR BOTH SIDES.

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PAGE 03 STATE 037331

ON RECENT SAIGON VISIT, FORMER AMB. DURBROW TOLD PRESS "NOT FROM ANYBODY DID WE HEAR" THAT US OFFICIALS TRYING TO KEEP SVN FROM VIOLATING C-F.

2. MCCOMBS (WP) FROM SAIGON WRITES OF CAMPAIGN TO "PURIFY" SOCIETY THAT IS IN FULL SWING WITH LOCAL VICE-ERADICATION COMMITTEES, POLICE RAIDS AND "ENDLESS" PURGES OF OFFICIALS. POLITICAL OBSERVERS NOTE THAT

CAMPAIGN CLOSELY TIED TO RECENT CABINET RESHUFFLE, BELIEVE BOTH TIMED TO COOL POPULAR DISCONTENT WITH PRICES, SHORTAGES AND INCREASING DISCOMFORTS, AND DOUBT IF BENEFICIAL AND LASTING CHANGE WILL RESULT. MCCOMBS GIVES CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS THAT "ROCKED" SAIGON STARTING IN LATE JANUARY, INCLUDING GAS PRICE JUMP, CONTRABAND CONFISCATION, GAMBLING CRACKDOWN, FIRING OF MINISTERS, CABINET RESIGNATION, RAIDS ON WESTERN-FREQUENTED BARS WITH ARRESTS OF AMERICANS, INSTALLATION OF NEW CABINET, AND SACKING OF MANY SENIOR MILITARY. COMMENTS THAT THIEU PROBABLY ENCOURAGED BY NHA, WHO SEEKS MORE POWER AND SEEMS GETTING IT. MOVE AGAINST SENIOR MILITARY MAY NOT BE TOO SWEEPING SINCE MANY FIRED ENJOYED SINECURES AND WERE POTENTIAL NUISANCES, WHILE FEW CONSIDERED POLITICALLY DISLOYAL

SINCE REPORTEDLY FAVORED "THIRD FORCE." NOW THIEU INTENDS PROMOTE MANY TRUSTED MILITARY OFFICERS TO TIGHTEN HIS GRIP ON ARMED FORCES. HIGH POLICE OFFICER HARANGUED REPORTER ON EVILS OF BARS THAT CATER TO WESTERNERS THAT MUST "CORRECT WAYS"; MANY AMERICANS AND VIETS THINK THIS MEANS LARGER BRIBES. SOME VIET SOURCES INDICATE GVN INTERESTED IN SETTING UP CASINO TO ATTRACT TOURIST DOLLARS, THUS MAKING VICE PAY OFF IN FOREIGN EXCHANGE.

3. AP IN NY QUOTES CARE OFFICIAL'S DESCRIPTION OF NEW, MORE HOPEFUL PROGRAMS IN SVN. BEFORE C-F, MAIN WORK WAS STOP-GAP DISASTER RELIEF, BUT NOW BUILDING ON MORE CONFIDENT NOTE BEGUN. NEW RESETTLEMENT TOWN NEAR PHAN RANG FOR REFUGEES FROM QUANG TRI IS DESCRIBED. COMMENTS MADE THAT CARE EMPHASIS IN SVN IS ON ASSISTING GVN IN RESETTLEMENT, AND AS UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 04 STATE 037331

US GOVT. INVOLVEMENT "FADING OUT," VOLAGS ARE ABLE TO COMMAND GREATER ATTENTION AND NOW MORE EFFECTIVE (PHINQ).

4. FANK, SUPPORTED BY ARTILLERY AND AIRCRAFT, LAUNCHES DRIVE TO PUSH REBELS FROM AREA SEVEN MILES SOUTH OF PP. FIGHTING ALSO CONTINUES NORTH AND NW OF PP (UPI, NYDN; WP).

CHINA

5. CHOU MAKES FIRST PUBLIC STATEMENT BY PRC LEADERSHIP ON CURRENT CAMPAIGN AGAINST LIN PIAO AND CONFUCIUS. AT SUNDAY DINNER FOR VISITING ZAMBIAN PRES., CHOU PRAISED GPCR'S "GREAT ACHIEVEMENTS" AND SAID "SURGING"

CAMPAIGN AGAINST LIN AND CONFUCIUS WILL BE CARRIED
THROUGH TO END (AP, CHITRIB). AFP PEKING REPORTS
OBSERVERS THERE FEEL CHOU'S DELIBERATE CHOICE OF
BANQUET ATTENDED BY FOREIGN DIPLOMATS AND JOU
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